

In the Drawings:

Please enter the enclosed two Replacement Sheets, which are amended in accordance with the Preliminary Amendment marked-up copy. In Figure 4, item “130” has been identified. In Figure 7, corresponding detents are added to half 310 relative to detents on half 330.

REMARKS

Applicant is grateful to the Examiner for indicating that claims 1 to 10 are allowed, and that claims 12 to 15, 18 and 21 contain subject matter that defines patentably over the prior art.

Amendments are being made to the Drawings and Claims. In the Drawings, items are added or are correctly located in accordance with the Preliminary Amendment. In the claims, claim 11 has been amended to provide limitations that the channels in the upper and lower portions have openings at the distal and proximal ends thereof and that the passageway has openings at the distal and proximal ends thereof. Similarly, claim 36 has been amended to provide that the distal channel has an opening at the distal end, and the proximal channels have openings at the proximal end. Support is found in the Drawings at Figures 1, 2 and 4 and in the Specification at Paragraphs [0023], [0024], [0029] and [0030]. Also, although withdrawn, claim 22 is amended to change “distal” to “remote” as with the amendments to other claims made by the Preliminary Amendment.

Claims 1 to 20 and 36 are presently pending and claims 21 to 35 are withdrawn. The Examiner has allowed claims 1 to 10, has indicated that claims 12 to 15, 18 and 21 contain allowable subject matter, and has rejected claims 11, 16, 17, 19, 20 and 36.

Claims 11, 16, 17, 19 and 36 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(e) as being anticipated by Zia et al. Claim 20 stands rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Zia et al. Reference Zia et al discloses a tubing device that provides a seamless transport path by using the tubing itself as the transport means. Upper and lower halves are hingedly connected, with the upper and lower halves having interior surfaces having half-channels that undergo a 180o turn

within the device so that both openings are along the same face of the device when closed after tubing ends are placed in the channel ends.

With regard to claim 11 as amended, and its dependent claims, and claim 36 as amended, the reference does not disclose that the channels have openings at both the proximal and distal ends of the device since the openings are side-by-side at the same device end, which is opposite from the hinge end. See Figures 10 to 12. Or having two channel ends that are not proximal and distal nor side-by-side as in Figures 14 and 16; or having additional openings as in Figure 18.

Regarding claim 20, it is believed that this dependent claim depends from an allowable claim and is therefore itself allowable.

It is believed that the claims as amended distinguish patentably over the prior art, and allowance thereof is respectfully requested. No new matter has been entered by the present amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

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October 16, 2006
(Date)

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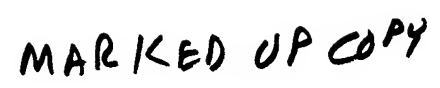


FIG. 4

Added
detents

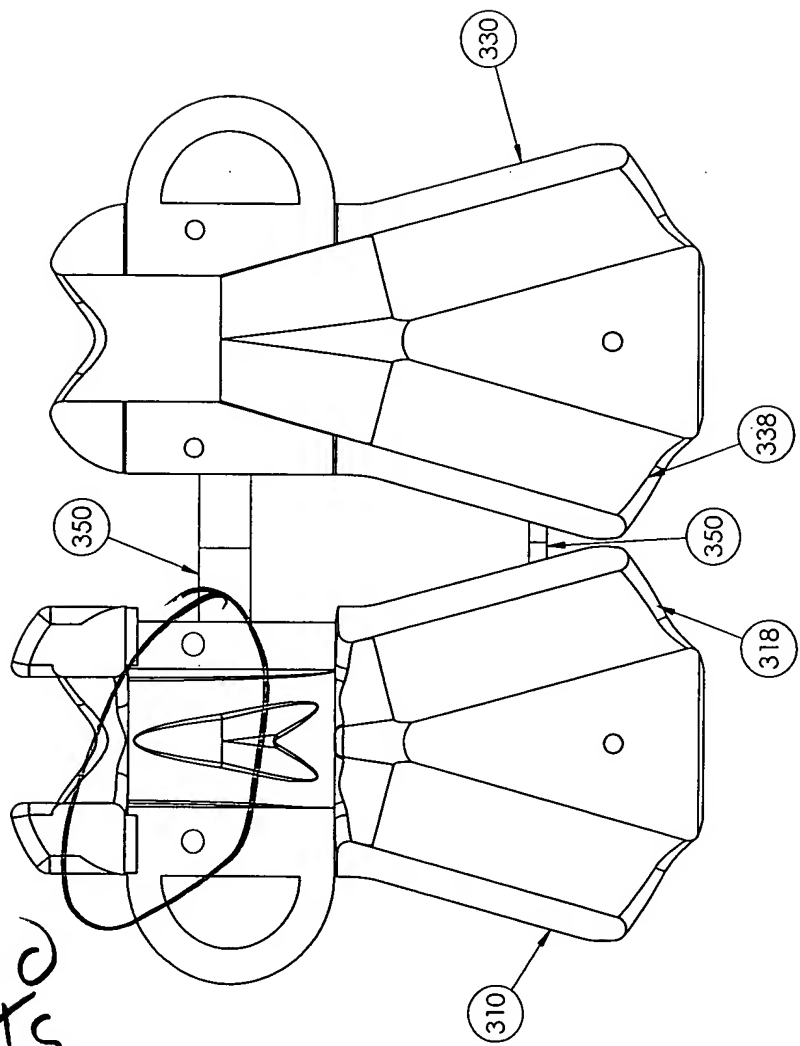


FIG. 7